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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM CHARGE MCCULLEY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [EU](#) [DA](#)
SUBJECT: YOUR MEETING WITH DANISH FM MOLLER MARCH 13

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Terence McCulley, Embassy Copenh
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¶1. (C) Madam Secretary, your predecessors have known Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moller as a good colleague and a capable representative of one of our closest allies in Europe. Your first bilateral meeting with Per Stig will signal our appreciation for Danish contributions to international security and underscore our interest in strengthening already-significant cooperation to confront global challenges. The Danes are absolutely committed to sustained, active engagement in the wider world, and they are looking forward to working closely with you and President Obama to make our common efforts as effective as possible.

A Steady Partner

¶2. (C) Denmark's commitment can be seen in its many overseas deployments, from its naval vessels on patrol off the Horn of Africa, to its peacekeeping forces in Kosovo and its battle-hardened troops engaging the Taliban in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province. Danish intelligence and security services work hand in hand with ours in combating al-Qaeda at home and abroad. A world leader in alternative energy technology, Danish firms are at the forefront of developments in wind power and biofuels, strengthening Denmark's "green" credentials as it prepares to host the UN Climate Summit (COP-15) in December 2009. Denmark contributes 0.8 percent of its GDP in development and humanitarian aid, mostly to Africa but also to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Palestinian territories.

¶3. (C) Re-elected to a third term last year, the Anders Fogh Rasmussen-led government presides over a thin majority but with a commanding position against a lackluster and frustrated opposition. The Danish economy has so far fared better than most in the current global economic crisis, having undergone a healthy, trade-fueled expansion in recent years that drove unemployment to record lows and put the government within sight of wiping out the Danish public debt altogether. Denmark is not without its problems -- among them the challenges of a multicultural society. Strained relations with its 200,000-strong Muslim immigrant population were highlighted during the 2006 cartoon crisis and have been exacerbated by the ongoing economic slowdown.

¶4. (C) Denmark itself is on the front lines of the battle against Islamic extremism and terror in Europe, and the Danes are working closely with us to disrupt nascent terror cells and promote better integration of immigrant communities. Danish authorities have made a number of high-profile arrests in the past two years, including one with direct links to al-Qaeda and on which we cooperated closely. Denmark has a mixed record on prosecutions and we are now providing them with assistance in this area as well. Although the cartoons/freedom of expression issue remains something of a

blind spot for the Danes, there are signs of an evolution in public opinion here; a poll last year showed majorities approving of the cartoon's original publication but disapproving of a more recent reprinting.

Moller's Agenda

15. (C) FM Moller's intense interest in an early meeting with you reflects both his desire to highlight his American ties for domestic advantage (although Per Stig no longer plays a major role in party politics) and the Danish government's enthusiasm for engaging our new administration. Something of an academic by nature even after eight years as foreign minister, Moller may seek from you a big-picture perspective on the Obama administration's goals and projections for near-term progress. We understand from our discussions with the Danish MFA that FM Moller has an ambitious agenda for your meeting, indicative of Denmark's global perspective, but rather more than can be covered effectively in a single encounter.

-- Afghanistan/Pakistan: With its 750-strong contingent in Afghanistan committed for the long haul, the Danes welcome our rededication to the ISAF mission and have offered useful input into our ongoing policy review. The Danish deployment enjoys broad parliamentary backing and public support, but the Danes remain troubled by slow progress and the lack of greater support from some Allies. Moller and others have expressed support for our renewed emphasis on what they term a "comprehensive approach" to the Taliban challenge (coordinated military and civilian efforts, empowerment of Afghan forces) and a recognition of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single strategic theater.

-- Russia: Per Stig will look to compare notes with you, having met Russian FM Lavrov just a week before you did. Moller's staff report that they found Lavrov markedly more open and cooperative than in previous encounters, which they attributed to positive signals coming from Washington and the humbling impact of the economic crisis. Danish officials maintain a healthy skepticism toward the Russians, but have welcomed our calls for a fresh start in relations with Russia where possible, particularly regarding Iran and strategic arms talks.

-- Middle East, Iran: Moller maintains a keen interest in the region, and will welcome hearing from you about U.S. strategy and the prospects for progress in the peace process. Per Stig has long advocated for greater engagement with Syria, both to advance the peace process and diminish Iranian influence. Denmark has traditionally been a strong supporter of maintaining a firm line on Iran, on non-proliferation, human rights and terrorism grounds, but we expect that Moller will welcome our interest in cautiously engaging Tehran on Afghanistan and other issues.

-- NATO Summit and Transatlantic Relations: In the Danes, you will find committed Atlanticists, convinced of the primacy of NATO (while looking to eliminate Denmark's EU "opt-outs" on defense, justice and the euro) but concerned about the Alliance's ability to meet new and ongoing challenges. Per Stig may seek to exchange views on agendas for the upcoming NATO and U.S.-EU summits, and could sound you out about the NATO Secretary General race, with Danish PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen among the leading (but undeclared) candidates.

-- Climate Change and Energy: FM Moller is sure to highlight Denmark's hosting of the UN COP-15 meeting here this December, which the Danes hope will approve a new global climate change treaty and solidify Danish credentials as a leader in renewable energy. Moller may seek some signal from you about likely U.S. participation at the COP-15 event and ask about the prospects for Congressional action and other developments that could strengthen American leadership toward a global agreement.

-- Among the other topics FM Moller may raise are joint efforts to combat high-seas piracy in the Gulf of Aden, a growing problem for Danish and international shipping there, and Denmark's upcoming mandate as head of the Arctic Council.

Per Stig organized a special ministerial meeting in Greenland last May to reduce tensions among the Arctic powers over polar claims, and the Arctic remains a special interest of his.

16. (C) Madam Secretary, you will find in Foreign Minister Moller a friendly colleague who recognizes the potential of even a small European country to make outsized contributions, if working in tandem with close allies such as us. I encourage you to acknowledge Denmark's efforts -- in Afghanistan, on human rights globally and in promoting agreement on climate change -- and signal your openness to close collaboration with the Danish government and Per Stig personally. Like any small state, Denmark picks its battles carefully and sometimes follows EU consensus while privately joining us in a different view. I am convinced that the promise of closer consultations can go along way toward encouraging the Danes to assume a higher profile within the EU and NATO on issues of importance to us, and make this strong partnership even better.

MCCULLEY